



**Eddie A. Perez**  
**Mayor**

## **MAYOR PEREZ SENDS LETTER OF CONCERN TO LIBRARY BOARD MEMBERS**

### **---MEDIA AND COMMUNITY RELEASE---**

(May 28, 2008)--- Mayor Eddie A. Perez is deeply concerned about reports of illegal behavior at the Main Branch of the Hartford Public Library. The Mayor has written a letter to Library Board Members urging them to take action to rectify a situation that could result in a loss of federal funding. The letter follows the Mayor's previous action 90 days ago of directing Police Chief Daryl K. Roberts to investigate safety issues at the new library facility.

Mayor Perez says, "As a parent and as the Mayor of this city, I can say that nothing is more important than the safety and well-being of our children. The library should be a safe place for our youngest residents to learn and explore."

The letter states, "I have been alerted to a potential funding issue that may arise because of recent reports. As you may be aware, the Children's Internet Protection act (CIPA) forbids public libraries to receive Federal assistance for Internet access unless they install software to block obscene or pornographic images and to prevent minors from accessing material harmful to them."

The Supreme Court upheld the act in the 2003 case UNITED STATES et al. v. AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION, INC., et al. In their decision, the Majority was extremely clear that blocking obscene sites was not a violation of the First Amendment rights of library patrons.

The reported library budget for the coming fiscal year shows more than \$1 million comes from "other grant sources" with one of those sources being the Federal Library Services and Technology Act. Additionally, the library benefits from Federal discounted rates under the Federal E-rate program, a benefit worth several thousand dollars annually.

On the funding issue, Mayor Perez states, "I fear that the library's ability to receive funding from both of these programs is in jeopardy because of the current Internet standards in place. As you are aware, the City is facing a very tight budget in the coming fiscal year. Department budgets have been reduced by 8% across the board and we have made plans to significantly reduce our staffing levels by eliminating unfilled positions. I want to be clear, there is no room in the City budget to augment the library budget should these funding sources be revoked."

Mayor Perez is looking to the Library Board to quickly remedy the problem.